

Special Session

Agenda Item #	1
Meeting Date	2/17/04
Prepared By	Catherine Waters, City Clerk
Reviewed By	Richard Finn, City Manager

Discussion Item	Resolution re: Modifications to State Voting Machines
Background	Councilmember Elrich has requested that the Council consider adoption of a resolution supporting State legislation to require modifications to the new voting machines purchased by the State of Maryland (i.e., Diebold - AccuVote Touch Screen Voting System) to create a verifiable paper trail.
Policy	The Council may adopt a resolution setting forth its position on a public matter.
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	Resolution HB53 SB393
Recommendation	Consider resolution for adoption.
Special Consideration	

Introduced by: Councilmember Elrich

RESOLUTION #2004-_____

Supporting Legislation to Require Modifications to New Voting Machines Purchased by the State of Maryland to Create a Verifiable Paper Trail

WHEREAS, the integrity of the vote is threatened by the new touch screen voting technology which has been shown to have numerous security vulnerabilities to human and programming error, equipment malfunction and malicious tampering; **AND**

WHEREAS, state legislatures are updating voting equipment in response to the federal Helping America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2001 which requires upgrades in voting equipment by 2006; **AND**

WHEREAS, some states and counties are moving toward or have already installed paperless electronic voting machines in spite of research, expert opinion, the lack of national technical standards and real life election debacles showing the integrity of voting is at high risk from touch screen voting machines; **AND**

WHEREAS, the use of secret proprietary software is unacceptable in a democracy, especially when that software is routinely unavailable to state election or elected officials, and under any circumstances ceding the responsibility to collect and count the vote to a private corporation is unacceptable; **AND**

WHEREAS, the disabled community has legitimate desire for full access to a secret and independent vote, and the technology exists today to build an electronic voting machine that incorporates a voter-verified paper audit trail that is accessible to vision-impaired voters; **AND**

WHEREAS, paper ballots are used in the UK, Canada, India and other sophisticated democracies; **AND**

WHEREAS, for counties and states where touch screen voting machines are already in place, a voter-verified paper audit trail is the best protection available to guarantee that an individual's vote has been both recorded and counted correctly by an electronic voting machine (such as a touch screen) especially when coupled with random audits based on the paper trail; **AND**

WHEREAS, four states (Nevada, California, New Hampshire and Wisconsin) have already required and guaranteed such a paper trail for their own citizens; **AND**

WHEREAS, two bills, HB 53 (sponsored by Montgomery County Delegate Karen Montgomery) and SB 393 are making their way through the Maryland State Legislature; **AND**

WHEREAS, the City Council of Takoma Park shares the concerns that the current system in place in Maryland is flawed; **AND**

WHEREAS, the City Council of Takoma Park believes that the best way to insure the integrity of the voting system is to have a verifiable paper trail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Takoma Park calls on the State Legislature, and our District 20 delegates and State Senator, in particular, to support the proposed legislation requiring modifications to the new voting machines that would create a verifiable paper trail.

ADOPTED this 9th day of February, 2004.

ATTEST:

Catherine E. Waters, CMC
City Clerk / Treasurer